

EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

STATEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

1976

Statement on the Situation in Southern Africa	23 February 1976
Communiqué, 1 st Meeting General Committee, Euro-Arab Dialogue	20 May 1976
Speech, Netherlands Foreign Minister, 31 st General Assembly of the United Nations	28 September 1976
Statement on Rhodesia	18 October 1976
Statement by the Netherlands Ambassador, Situation in Cyprus, 31 st General Assembly of the United Nations	3 November 1976
Annual report to the European Parliament on political cooperation	17 November 1976

The European Council issued other statements. See the conclusions of the Luxembourg (1-2 April 1976), Brussels (12-13 July 1976) and The Hague (29-30 November 1976) meetings.

Citation “Bull EC” is the Bulletin of the European Communities.

24. Statement by the Foreign Ministers on the Situation in Southern Africa (Luxembourg, 23 February 1976)

1.

The Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the Community, meeting in Luxembourg and recalling the decisions which they took in respect of the People's Republic of Angola, examined problems arising in this region of Africa.

2.

The Ministers have very closely and with great concern followed the development of the conflict in Angola which has caused so much suffering and loss of life and so seriously damaged the economy. They call for peace to be re-established which is necessary for the reconstruction and development of the country.

3.

They believe that the people of Angola should decide on their own destiny. In view of this, they greatly appreciated the efforts of the OAU to find an African solution to the difficulties and refrained from anything likely to harm their success. From this point of view they condemned all external military intervention and fervently hoped that it would be very quickly stopped. In the interests of the prosperity of the region they hope that peaceful and constructive co-operation can be established which presupposes good neighbourly relations between the African States which are part of it.

4.

The Ministers confirmed the basic positions of the nine Member States of the Community:

124 Source: European Political Co-operation, third edition, Press and Information Office, Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, 1978.

- Willingness of the Nine to co-operate insofar as the African States wish them to do so and rejection of any action by any State aimed at setting up a sphere of influence in Africa;
- Respect for the independence of all African States and the right of the latter to determine their national policy quite independently and without foreign interference;
- Support for the OAU's attempts to promote African co-operation;
- Right of self-determination and independence of the Rhodesian and Namibian peoples;
- Condemnation of the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

18. Communiqué issued after the 1st
Meeting of the General Committee of
the Euro-Arab Dialogue
(Luxembourg, 20 May 1976, excerpt)

I.

...

4.

During the meeting both sides put forward their views on all aspects of the Euro-Arab Dialogue including political issues, and studied carefully the views put forward by the other side. They expressed their willingness to continue the dialogue in the future and determined some of the specific terms of their co-operation.

5.

Both sides recalled the various ties which link Europe to the Arab World by virtue of geographical proximity and the interchange between both civilizations. They agreed that these ties, as well as common interests and closer relationship between the two regions, should lead to a greater understanding between the parties to the Dialogue.

6.

They emphasized that security in Europe is linked to the security in the Mediterranean area and that of the Arab region. Both sides expressed their great concern about the dangerous situation prevailing in the Middle East and its threat to international peace and security.

7.

Both sides declared their firm commitment to peace, security and justice, in accordance with the purpose and principles of the United Nations Charter. They will pursue the dialogue in this spirit.

8.

Both sides explained their views on the question of Palestine and on the Middle East crisis. They noted with great interest the statements made by each side, and recognized that a

solution to the question of Palestine based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people is a crucial factor in the achievement of a just and lasting peace.

9.

The European side recalled the four points of their Declaration of 6 November 1973 and their statement during the last session of the General Assembly. They also reaffirmed that in their view the principles enshrined in these texts remain the foundation on which a just and lasting peace should be sought. They expressed the firm hope that early progress could be made towards this objective and affirmed their determination to do all in their power to contribute to its achievement.

10.

The Arab side shares the European view that force and fait accompli are not elements upon which stable international relations can be based. They affirmed that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East requires the fulfilment of the following elements:

- (a) Withdrawal by Israel from the occupied territories,
- (b) Recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people,
- (c) Participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in all international peace efforts.

11.

The General Committee established the organizational framework for the Dialogue so as to provide an institutionalized structure for the relations between the European Communities and the Arab World.

12.

Both sides expressed their expectation that a Euro-Arab Dialogue meeting on the level of Foreign Ministers be held at an appropriate date. They agreed to consider practical steps for the preparation of this meeting.

...

28. Speech by Mr van der Stoel, Netherlands Foreign Minister, at the Thirty-first General Assembly of the United Nations (New York, 28 September 1976)

I should now like to address you as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Community and as President of European Political Co-operation.

In today's world the European Community is a living political and economic reality. Our union has yet to be completed, but we are determined to unite. We naturally realize that the further unification of Europe—whose variety of culture has proved so vital and fruitful—will be a complex process, but we know that we are intent upon a project of fundamental importance. The radical reorganization of one part of the world community of nations will have an effect—in my view a beneficial one—on the whole of that community. The Europe we are building is one in which material welfare will rest upon social justice, one which will be democratic and soon have its own freely elected parliament, a Europe which must be outward looking to the whole world.

As it develops, our internal policy, based on steady growth, social justice and democracy, must also make its contribution to growth, justice and freedom elsewhere in the world, to a close and productive relationship with countries outside the communities and in particular with the developing countries.

Structural changes in the world economy are a necessary condition for improvement of the social and economic situation of millions of people throughout the world. In view of its own economic, financial, technological strength and capabilities, the community which has al-

ready proved to be one of the most dynamic factors of the world economy, recognizes the need for increasingly coherent policies for development co-operation based on generally agreed objectives and policy measures. It is with this objective in mind that, for example, the community applies and continues to improve its Generalized System of Preferences for developing countries.

During the Seventh Special Session the countries of the European Community showed their readiness unitedly to make a positive contribution toward the building of a more just and equitable international economic order. Today, I wish to reiterate that pledge on behalf of the nine members and our will to carry out the commitments that we undertook at that Special Session. The negotiations that took place at UNCTAD IV and those continuing at the Paris North-South dialogue are ample proof that, while there seems enough common ground for real progress, wide divergencies of opinion remain on important issues. The members of the European Community, while following the path of conciliation and dialogue, are determined to spare no effort to implement the pledges we gave last year in New York and now recently in Nairobi and to make a success of the Paris dialogue.

Let me assure you, Mr President, there will be no retraction of previous promises. On the contrary, the members of the Community, recognizing the interests of the world economy as a whole, remain committed to a structural improvement of the position of the developing countries in the world economy, taking particular account of the urgent problems of those countries most in need. It is in this spirit that we will approach the forthcoming negotiations and discussions which will take place in conformity with the relevant resolutions as adopted at UNCTAD IV.

Moreover, the participating countries at the Paris conference on international economic co-operation are back at the negotiating table and it is our sincere hope that all

efforts will be made for a successful conclusion of the ministerial meeting in December. For its part, the European Community is determined to contribute to a concrete outcome of the Paris conference. In Paris we speak with one voice, our joint participation reflects the increasing involvement of the European Community and its increasing weight in the North-South relationship.

The Community welcomes the entry into force of the ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé last April. The importance of this Convention—which relies upon a certain number of new ideas—is without precedent in relations between developing and developed countries. It concerns more than half a billion human beings. Its objective is to establish and develop, in a spirit of friendship, economic relations between the Community of the Nine and more than 50 developing countries.

Furthermore, the importance of the Convention of Lomé rests upon the fact that all its members are placed within an 'equal partnership' on a basis of complete equality between partners. This implies a mutual responsibility.

The Community, for its part, will most seriously and constructively consider the wishes of the ACP countries voiced at the first meeting of the ACP-EEC Council of Ministers at which I had the honour to represent the Community.

Finally, we welcome the increase in the number of participants in the Convention: Surinam, the Comoros and the Seychelles have all deposited their acts of accession. Negotiations have begun with Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde and with Papua New Guinea for their accession.

The Nine also attach particular importance to the United Nations. They have proved this so far by endeavouring to play an active and constructive role both individually and collectively. During the last few years, their co-oper-

ation has manifested itself repeatedly in this Assembly in common statements and declarations of vote on behalf of the Nine and by their votes being cast on the basis of a common or at least a co-ordinated position. We shall continue to use our joint influence and weight for the purpose of strengthening the United Nations as the principal instrument for international security and co-operation.

The situation in Southern Africa remains a matter of deep concern.

In Rhodesia the acceptance of the Anglo-U.S. proposals by Mr. Smith's cabinet represents a significant step forward. The Nine express the hope that this will indeed prove to be a turning-point in the history of Rhodesia. If all sides show good faith, with African and Europeans working together, the foundations could be laid for an independent Zimbabwe which will then take its rightful place among the family of nations.

On 23 February of this year, the Foreign Ministers of the Nine reaffirmed in a joint declaration their basic positions with regard to Southern African issues. We condemn South Africa's policy of apartheid and we advocate the right to self-determination and independence of the peoples of Rhodesia and Namibia. We respect the independence of all African States and their right to define their national policies in complete sovereignty and without foreign interference. Our countries support actions by the Organization of African Unity promoting African co-operation. We are ready to co-operate with the African States and reject any action by whatever state aimed at establishing a zone of influence in Africa.

Until fundamental changes come about, there can be no peace in Southern Africa. Therefore our countries welcome the present efforts to find peaceful solutions to the problems of the area. The Nine remain willing to contribute to these efforts.

As regards Namibia, the Nine stated in their message to the Secretary-General on Namibia Day that negotiations should take place with representatives of all political groups in that territory, including the SWAPO, in order to pave the way for Namibia's independence in the near future. The United Nations should, in our view, focus its own contribution to the solution of the question of Namibia on the promotion of self-determination by the Namibian people in a manner both democratic and peaceful.

Our Governments do not intend to recognize the Transkei on the occasion of its purported independence. False solutions to the problems of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa, such as the establishment of homelands or bantustans as presently pursued by the South African government, *promote* rather than *diminish* racial discrimination. The popular upheaval and resistance to apartheid should have convinced the South African government that apartheid has no future and constitutes an unsupportable violation of human dignity. South Africa is a multi-racial society in which all people, irrespective of their race or colour, should have the right to live peacefully together on the basis of equality. Apartheid is in flagrant contradiction with this fundamental right and should be eliminated. As long as it is practised, it will be resisted by those whose basic human rights are denied. The Nine are unequivocal in their firm belief that justice and freedom for all people should prevail in South Africa.

In the Middle East the tragic events in Lebanon have brought untold suffering to the inhabitants of that strife-torn country. The nine countries of the European Community deplore the tragic bloodshed which has claimed and continues to claim so many victims. On a number of occasions members of the European Community have shown their concern over the situation in Lebanon and have expressed the hope that all involved will do everything possible to bring this conflict to an end.

The Nine are prepared to support all meaningful efforts of conciliation and welcome those which are in progress in the inter-Arab context. They underline their continuing commitment to the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon. I should like to assure President Sarkis, on his assumption of office as the new Head of State of Lebanon, of the good will of the members of the European Community in the fulfilment of the difficult tasks which lie ahead of him. With regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict the members of the European Community are convinced that negotiations based on a minimum of consensus among all the parties concerned are essential for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this respect they reiterate their continuing firm attachment to the resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council and to the principles which are the basis of their position and which I repeat:

- I. the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;
- II. the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967;
- III. respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;
- IV. recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

I would like to emphasize that a solution of the conflict in the Middle East will only be possible if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity, is translated into fact.

For their part the countries of the European Community are prepared to assist to the best of their ability and to the extent desired by the parties in the achievement of a

settlement, and, as soon as the settlement is approved by all parties, to help in making it a reality.

In this context they would be prepared, as they have stated earlier, to consider participation in international guarantees for the implementation of a peace settlement.

Cyprus is a problem of deep concern for the Nine. It involves three countries associated with the European Community. That is the reason why the Nine have spared and will spare no effort to bring the parties concerned to the conference table and to advocate restraint to all sides. We are convinced that this problem can be solved solely through negotiations. Our basic position that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Cyprus should be maintained and safeguarded remains unchanged. The Nine welcome and support the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and his Representative on Cyprus to assist the parties concerned in finding a solution to the conflict.

The Nine are aware that peace, détente and human freedom are indivisible and inseparable, in the world and in Europe. They acted together in negotiating the Final Act of Helsinki on European Security and Co-operation and are striving together for the implementation of that Act. It is too early to judge the follow-up of Helsinki. I wish to state, however, on behalf of the Nine that, if we are earnest in our quest for peace and security in Europe, the Final Act must be implemented in its integrity, in all its interrelated component parts. It is in that spirit and in good faith that we approach the meeting to be convened in Belgrade next year.

On behalf of the nine countries of the European Communities I wish now to speak about a matter of deep concern to them: international terrorism and in particular the increasing frequency of acts of violence which endanger or take innocent human lives, particularly when

such acts of violence take on international dimensions and can only be tackled effectively by international action. In this respect the taking of hostages constitutes one of the most heinous crimes against human life, liberty and the security of the human person as guaranteed in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regardless of political ends, regardless of motives, regardless of the identity or affiliation of its perpetrators. The Member States of the European Communities, as they have stated most recently in their declaration of 13 July 1976, regard this inhuman method of taking hostages as absolutely unacceptable and they condemn it in the strongest possible terms.

Without overlooking the fact that the solution of the issues underlying certain forms of international terrorism would undoubtedly contribute to the suppression of this evil, and without neglecting or impeding all the efforts being made to this effect, it nevertheless remains an illusion to assume that the problem of terrorism in its broad sense would be solved only by tackling any one underlying issue. Furthermore, there are serious indications that we are confronted with a growing danger of a worldwide network of professional criminal terrorism ready to strike at any moment against any state and its citizens. In this unsettled world, new burning issues of conflict are bound to arise time and again, but international actions to stamp out terrorism cannot wait.

It must by now be clear that no country, no people, no government can hope to be spared from acts of terrorism, kidnapping and hijacking against its own citizens and interests, unless all countries agree on taking individually and jointly decisive action. None will be spared, unless all take action.

The failure to oppose insidious violence against the innocent, the defenceless and the unprotected is deeply regretted by our nine countries. We feel it is in the

interest of all governments to take resolute action. We feel it is in the interest of all governments to co-operate in combating all acts of international terrorism. This Assembly must live up to its responsibilities in this respect and should initiate appropriate measures.

In their declaration of 13 July, the members of the European Communities have given ample evidence of their willingness and determination to co-operate with other countries in setting up effective world-wide measures to eradicate and prevent international terrorism, kidnappings and hijackings. We consider effective measures against the taking of hostages a matter of special urgency and I would like in this context to draw the attention of this Assembly to the fact that my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, will submit an important and timely proposal on this issue. I invite this Assembly to give this proposal due consideration and to take positive action.

It is our sincere wish, Mr. President, that this thirty-first Assembly may produce results commensurate with the expectations cherished by all our peoples, all over the world.

Thank you Mr. President.

29. Statement by the Nine Foreign Ministers on Rhodesia
(Luxembourg, 18 October 1976)

The Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the European Community, meeting in Luxembourg, welcome the British Government's speedy action in convening a conference in Geneva to discuss the formation of an interim government in Rhodesia, which would pave the way for majority rule within two years.

They appeal solemnly to all the parties concerned to seize this opportunity to achieve a just and peaceful solution to this longstanding problem by bringing about an orderly and peaceful transfer of power to the majority in Zimbabwe.

They confirm that they will meanwhile continue to comply strictly with their obligations relating to sanctions.

Source: European Political Co-operation, third edition, Press and Information Office, Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, 1978.

30. Statement by the Netherlands Ambassador on the Situation in Cyprus at the Thirty-first General Assembly of the United Nations (New York, 3 November 1976)

Taking the floor on behalf of the nine countries of the European Community, whose views I have been invited to present, I shall avoid as much as possible references to the past. The history of the problem relating to the unhappy and unsettled situation in Cyprus has been recalled often enough for those who are most directly involved to realize that we appreciate their anguish and share their concern. Again during the general debate of this thirty-first General Assembly the numerous references to Cyprus have given proof not only of the continued concern of Member States but also of our conviction that efforts should be renewed to seek the elimination of the divergencies that separate, and have separated for too long, the parties concerned.

Precisely a year ago the Italian Permanent Representative, who at that time represented the Presidency of the Nine, gave a clear and concise statement which embodied the position of our countries. Developments since then have, unfortunately, produced little progress. The involvement of our nine countries with the people of Cyprus and our interest in the relations between Greece and Turkey being as deep as ever before, we consider it our pressing duty to direct ourselves once again to this grave problem in order to consider the immediate future.

The Nine are not oblivious to the fact that the divergent views have placed the parties in seemingly irreconcilable positions. In itself it is not sufficient to urge the parties

to resume negotiations. It is our fervent hope that they will find the courage and the strength required to breach the existing gap.

The Nine have followed with particular attention the course along which the intercommunal talks proceeded, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. The Nine have endeavoured through direct contacts with the parties concerned, to encourage meaningful intercommunal talks. We wish to pay tribute to the patience and resourcefulness of Mr. Waldheim and of his collaborators, in particular his Special Representative in the island, Ambassador Perez de Cuellar. It is clear that the failure to make progress, in spite of all efforts, must be attributed to the reluctance of the parties to make sufficient concessions through substantive negotiations. We sincerely hope these will be resumed in the very near future.

The nine countries of the European Community also wish to put on record our appreciation for the continued role of UNFICYP.

As time moves on, it becomes ever more urgent to resume negotiations within a very short while. Wisdom and statesmanship of the political leaders will have to prevail. In order to avoid further delay in the appearance of results, it will be of utmost importance for the parties not to frustrate progress by procedural difficulties.

Since the parties concerned are well aware of the close and continued interest of the nine Governments of the European Community, they will understand why we shall not relinquish our effort to bring them together. In doing so, we remain faithful and shall continue to adhere to the basic premises: independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.

An indispensable requirement for the achievement of this three-fold purpose is a better understanding between the two communities, whose essential role in the process of

working out a solution we recognize. Therefore, we appeal to their leaders to help create an atmosphere which is conducive to a settlement.

In the view of our nine Governments the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly as well as of the Security Council should be implemented.

The Nine are ready to help “establish the basis for a constructive and meaningful further round of negotiations”, using the words of the Secretary-General in the Introduction to his Annual Report. The Nine consider it essential for those participating to aim at one goal: the future well-being of the Cypriot people. By achieving this fundamental objective they will serve the cause of maintaining the peace in the eastern Mediterranean.

Political cooperation

Annual report to the European Parliament

2503. On 17 November Mr Max van der Stoel, President of the Council of the European Communities and of the Conference of Foreign Ministers, gave the following report to the European Parliament on political cooperation:

'In my introduction to the discussion on political cooperation I should like to stress that European political cooperation is playing an increasingly important role in cooperation in general among the Nine. Perhaps it would be useful on this occasion to remind you once more of the history of European political cooperation. Originally our sole aim was to arrive at common positions, where these were necessary for the support of Community policy, but gradually the consultation was extended to cover all possible subjects with which the Nine had to deal at international level, and it is remarkable that the Nine now appear to be becoming more and more successful in reaching common positions. This form of consultation has also become much more intensive. Developments of this kind are to be welcomed since European political cooperation is also an element in progress towards a European Union.

I should now like to mention a number of issues which are important in the context of political cooperation. These are the Middle East, the Euro-Arab Dialogue, the serious problems in Southern Africa, the Cyprus conflict and the

strengthening of East-West relations. Before going into these matters individually, I would like to stress that in preparation for and during the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Nine always consult together on the international issues on the agenda.

First of all, the Middle East. In recent months, the nine countries of the European Community have together devoted considerable attention to the tragic events in the Lebanon. In particular, they have examined the possibility of cooperating with others in offering aid to the victims of the conflict in that country wherever possible. In my capacity as President of the Council of the European Communities, I also sent a message to President Sarkis of the Lebanon, on the occasion of his taking up office, expressing my hope on behalf of the nine countries of the Community that his entry into office would represent the beginning of a new period in the history of the Lebanon which would see an end to the conflict in his country and the restoration of peace, and that the country's independence and territorial integrity would be respected. In addition, in my speech at the 31st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 28 September, I described once more, on behalf of the Member States, the united attitude of the countries of the Community regarding a possible solution to the conflict in the Middle East. I said that the members of the European Community were convinced that the negotiations must be conducted on the basis of a minimum consensus of all the parties involved in the conflict—which is essential if just and lasting peace is to be established in the Middle East. I reaffirmed the fact that the nine countries of the Community stand by Resolutions Nos 242 and 338 of the Security Council, and also drew attention to the statement of 6 November 1973 which described the principles underlying the common position of the Nine regarding the Middle East question.

I also stressed that it would only be possible to solve the conflict in the Middle East if the legal right of the Palestinian people to express its na-

tional identity in concrete terms was respected. This will be the guiding principle for the nine countries of the European Community during the debate on the Middle East at today's sitting of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Speaking of the Middle East, I must just mention briefly the situation as regards the Euro-Arab Dialogue. The General Committee met for the first time in May of this year. In their opening statements, the European and Arab Delegations gave their general views on the significance of the Dialogue. The meeting provided an opportunity to examine those areas in which the existing co-operation between the countries of the Community and the Arab countries could be extended. Since the meeting in Luxembourg, the various working parties and sub-groups have met to examine further the possibilities for cooperation in fields such as industry, trade, agriculture, finance, infrastructure, technology, culture and social affairs. A clearer picture of what the Dialogue can achieve is gradually emerging. The possibility of a number of joint agricultural projects is under consideration. The question of the protection of investments was naturally discussed in the context of financial cooperation. In the field of technology, the possibilities for translating into reality the principles agreed upon and publicly stated in other international forums were examined. In the social sphere, questions of living and working conditions for migrant workers were considered. In the cultural field, plans were made for the organization of symposia and the production of a catalogue of cultural institutions. It was originally thought that it would be possible to hold the next meeting of the General Committee in Tunis this December. Contacts between the European and Arab chairmen, however, indicate that this meeting will probably be held at the beginning of next year. This possible postponement does not arise from any political motives, but is a purely technical matter in connection with the as yet uncompleted preparatory and coordinating work.

And now to Africa. During the last six months, there have been various developments in south-

ern Africa which have called for the particular and active attention of the Nine and provided a stimulus to European political cooperation. The joint consultations and the frank exchange of information and views have increased further. The growing acuteness of the situation in southern Africa is a source of very great concern to the nine Member States. I will now try to summarize briefly the attitude of the Member States with regard to southern Africa. Firstly, I should like to remind you that at the Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity, at which the problems of southern Africa were a major issue, the Nine took steps to ensure that the member states of this organization were better informed of the Community's views. Secondly, the developments in connection with Transkei and the announcement that in October this was to be the first of a series of homelands to be granted sovereignty, led us to discuss what attitude we should adopt on this matter. The Nine have always been of the opinion that a joint position carries more weight than individual statements. In the section relating to the Community of the speech I made to the General Assembly on 28 September last, I announced the intention of the Nine not to recognize Transkei in October. This decision was based on the view that the granting of independence to Transkei stemmed from South Africa's apartheid policy of which the Nine reject.

Thirdly, with a view to contributing towards a breakthrough in the Zimbabwe question, the Nine decided to issue a forceful Community statement declaring their full support for the British proposals for a conference in Geneva which might pave the way towards a majority government within two years. As regards Namibia, the Nine asked Pretoria what measures the South African Government was taking with a view to finding a swift and acceptable solution to this problem. I should like to remind you in connection with the apartheid regime in South Africa itself that the critical dialogue between the countries of the Community and South Africa is continuing.

Finally, I can inform you that the question of the recognition of the Republic of the Comoros will also be discussed within the context of political cooperation.

I now come to the Cyprus question, which is a regular topic of discussion among the Nine. We have examined the possibilities of finding a swift solution to the conflicts on and around the island. Our basic premise has always been that a solution must be reached by means of negotiations and must aim at maintaining and guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. Following the fifth round of talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in February of this year, it emerged that the representatives of the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus were not prepared to meet around the conference table again in May under Mr Waldheim's chairmanship, as had been agreed at the end of the fifth round. Since then, the Member States have again both jointly and severally taken every opportunity to urge a resumption of the inter-community discussions in accordance with the offer of good offices made by the nine Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 13 February 1975 in Dublin, when they also assured the Secretary-General of the United Nations once more of their support in the implementation of the task assigned to him by the Security Council, i.e. to endeavour to achieve a lasting solution which would be acceptable to all parties involved in the conflict. These activities, including the contacts with both negotiating parties in Cyprus, both by and on behalf of the Presidency, were among the factors which led Mr Waldheim to take the initiative of inviting Mr Papadopoulos and Mr Onan to New York on 3 September last to discuss with him the possibility of resuming the negotiations under his leadership. After these talks both sides said that they were willing to resume the talks in Nicosia under the chairmanship of the special representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, although no date was yet decided on.

In my capacity as President of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Community, I too discussed the Cyprus question with the heads of the Greek and Turkish Governments and with my colleagues, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, during my visits to Athens and Ankara in August and September respectively. On these occasions and during my later meetings with my Turkish and Greek colleagues I explained the position of the Nine, and urged them to use their influence to bring about a rapid resumption of inter-community consultation regarding the major issues in Cyprus, which so far has not been possible, mainly owing to procedural problems. The Nine are maintaining close contact with the Government of the United States on this matter, again via the Netherlands Government, which currently occupies the Presidency of the Council.

I should now like to speak about European political cooperation and East-West relations. As the 'follow-up' meeting to the Helsinki security conference draws nearer, by which I mean the coming conference in Belgrade, interest in this subject is increasing. This interest is reflected not only in the many meetings of the Working Party on the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe within the framework of European political cooperation, but also in the fact that the follow-up to Helsinki has figured regularly on the agenda of the Political Affairs Committee during the last few months. The Working Party I have just mentioned was able to complete its analysis of the text of the Final Act this summer—an extremely time-consuming but useful undertaking which resulted in a number of documents together totalling several hundred pages. The Nine will be able to use this analysis as a basis for their work in Belgrade, particularly in connection with the assessment of how the agreements reached in Helsinki have been implemented. The exchange of information and opinions on this question has been pursued, and its results include a series of parallel representations by the Nine in Moscow aimed at improving economic information. The preparation for the Belgrade conference got under

way with a study of a number of practical and theoretical aspects. Clearly, it will only be possible to make final choices for Belgrade at a fairly late stage, in the light of the East-West situation as a whole. Nevertheless, it is useful even at this early juncture to reflect on the various options open to us. Thus the questions currently under consideration include the areas in which it might be possible for us too to submit new proposals, with a view to both maintaining the multilateral dialogue and to achieving some progress in certain matters of interest to the Nine. In addition, we must bear in mind that some neutral countries which are still extremely interested in the follow-up to Helsinki may also make proposals, and the Nine would be well-advised to ensure efficient cooperation is possible with this group.

Another point deserving of our attention is the question of how we can best assess the extent to which the Final Act of Helsinki has been translated into reality; this is, in our view, the main task of the Belgrade Conference. The basic requirement here is frank, unambiguous debate, but we must also avoid unnecessary polemics. Nor should we forget that all those participating in these talks do so on an equal footing. If, in effect, only the activities of the Soviet Union are subjected to intense scrutiny, this will not be in keeping with the methods used so far in the discussions concerning Helsinki. The Nine are therefore thinking in terms of an assessment for each country. The most suitable form for this to take, however, must be further investigated.

Finally, and likewise in preparation for Belgrade, the Working Party is currently working on a detailed definition of the concept '*détente*', since this will be an important topic—certainly in the introductory speeches—and it would be useful if the Nine could adopt a common definition of the term so that the same yardstick could be used in assessing how much progress has been made in the process of *détente*. The Working Party has been considering this problem since last July and it looks as if its activities may be successfully completed within a few months.

I should like to round off my *résumé* of the various activities undertaken jointly by the Nine in recent months by stressing once more that our exchange of views is becoming more and more intensive and that it is this extremely intensive exchange of views on practically all current international political problems facing the Nine, together with the resulting increased understanding of each other's points of view and intentions, which have contributed to the fact that the Nine are now more able to adopt common positions than in the past.

This is not always the case, as we see from the way the Nine sometimes vote in the United Nations. However, it remains true that the subjects of which we agree and decide to adopt a common position are becoming more and more numerous.'